

VOTE - Voter Outreach Through Education Washington Secretary of State

WASHINGTON STATE CURRICULUM GRADES 8-12

TEACHER: LESSON 8

THEME: WHO? ME? RUN FOR OFFICE?

"Whether you think you can or think you can't, you're right."
(Henry Ford)

"Leadership, like swimming, cannot be learned by reading about it."
(Henry Mintzberg)

There is consensus across the generations that for democracy to renew itself there must be a commitment on the part of each new generation. New leaders must arise to become "change agents" who will "walk the talk" of the American dream. Young people have stepped forward in the past and they must continue to do so for the reasons voiced above.

ACTIVITY:

This lesson will introduce students to a useful web site for obtaining information about what offices are available for their future candidacy and what procedures are involved for filing for public office. The website is www.vote.wa.gov. This activity will also acquaint students with the opportunities, requirements and timelines of seeking elected office so they might not only consider it but also plan for the possibility of becoming an elected official.

This exercise will help them realize that they have a whole range of elected positions from which to choose. They will find that all offices require U.S. citizenship and they must be at least 18 years old. They will discover that some offices have unique requirements.

Students will need access to the Internet. You will need to reproduce enough copies of the lesson for each student and decide if they are to do this as an individual assignment or a collaborative one. Given the exploratory nature of these activities, it is suggested that this lesson be done in teams of two.

Questions and answers from their lesson are provided for you below.

Questions:

1. How many statewide, non-judicial, non-legislative offices are you eligible to file for when you turn 18 years old?
2. What are the last four offices listed above the section on Judicial Offices?
3. In the description of each office, you see the option to "Click here to see the current ____."
4. What are the two common requirements to seek the office of State Representative or State Senator?
5. In Yakima County, how many elected Fire District Commissioner positions are there in total, AND what is the length of a term for this position?
6. Besides county offices, what other categories of elected office at a more local level would be an option for you when you decide to seek public office?
7. Clicking on the first bullet (Declaration...), where would a candidate for PCO obtain the necessary filing form?
8. Clicking on "When to File," is the filing period for the office of PCO shorter or longer than for state and county offices?
9. What is the beginning date for filing your candidacy for ANY office?
10. Clicking on "Where to File," if you are seeking a City Council, School Board or PCO position, where will you file your Declaration of Candidacy Form?
11. Clicking on "Filing Fees," what is the filing fee for A) the office of PCO? B) an elected position that is paid \$50,000 annually?
12. Clicking on "Indigent Candidates," what is the alternative to the filing fee if you can't afford to pay it?

ANSWERS:

1. Nine offices
2. Attorney General, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Commissioner of Public Lands and Insurance Commissioner
3. Salary
4. The candidate must be a citizen of the United States and a qualified voter in the legislative district from which he or she files for.
5. 28 Commissioners; 6 year term
6. School, fire, port and water districts
7. County Auditor or elections officer
8. Longer
9. The fourth Monday in July
10. With the County Auditor or elections officer

11. A) One dollar B) 1% of the annual salary (\$500)
12. Nominating Petition. Indigent candidates can file a Nominating Petition accompanied by at least one valid signature for each dollar of the filing fee for the office sought, and the signatures must be of registered voters from the jurisdiction for which the candidate is filing.